

**KARO ECHO Meeting**  
10 December 2018  
Kensington Community Center

Present:

Hal KK6NDF

Don NI6A

Larry Vanselow, KK6GIO

Karen KK6ZPM

Jerry K6KOP

Rob K6RJM

Howdy KE6BEE (joined at 8:17)

Jamuel KM6HBO

Dave Roth KM6TCB

Don Lewis

Natalie KM6UCF

Jay KJ6WSS

Agenda

**Approval of November minutes**

Jamuel moved approve; Rob seconded. Unanimously approved.

**Approval of the [HYPERLINK "https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jSxIKr9n9sioKxqbMJyfZgpJyWGKqxXu/view" \h KAROECHO Disaster Communication Plan](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jSxIKr9n9sioKxqbMJyfZgpJyWGKqxXu/view)**

The plan, authored by Don Simon, is a remarkably complete document, with a lot of links.

Jay moved to approve; Rob seconded. Unanimously approved.

Hal noted that there's a huge amount of material on the website, and many of us have failed to realize how much information is there. Rob notes that there is a search function within the site; it is the magnifying glass in the upper right-hand corner of the site. This will be noted in the next newsletter.

**Voluntary dues for the coming year**

We need operational money; *e.g.*, the 501(c)(3) application is \$400. Funds could also go toward equipment. We agreed in November to the concept of dues, and to look at what other organizations charge.

Jerry mentioned that there were left over funds from the Kensington funding source that was not yet spent. Kevin does not have jurisdiction over Kensington's sources. Hal explained that we should work with local authorities to see what funds are available, but we need our own funds. Rob's research shows that other ham organizations charge dues in the range of \$20-\$40. Dues could also "prune" the membership to those who are actually interested in participating. The constitution requires that those who vote be paying members. Jay moved to set the dues at \$30/annually for an individual and \$40/annually for an all inclusive family membership. Seconded and approved. Karen opposed.

#### **Approval of the nomination committee and review of candidates for club officers**

Don emailed the group to ask for volunteers to serve on the board, and stressed the importance of everyone pitching in so that nobody burns out. Don is stepping away from the vice presidency. Natalie volunteered for the secretary position.

Don moved to approve the three positions, with one vacant position: Hal Graboske, President; Larry Vanselow, Treasurer; Natalie DeJarlais, Secretary. Motion was seconded and the slate as nominated was elected..

#### **Need for more operators; outreach**

We need operators so that they can operate radios during a disaster, and are short of people. How do we encourage people to participate as hams? Don recognized that people are stressed by the amount of time they have to work, commute, and fulfill other obligations.

**Brochure Mailing:** Don and Rob are doing outreach to people who have received their licenses in the last six months. They're mailing brochures and paying for stamps out of pocket; they will be reimbursed in January once dues are collected.

Hal notes that it is hard for both CERT and KAROECHO to get new members into the meetings and leadership, making coordination between the two difficult. He also wonders what is it about the marketing of CERT that fails to attract people, and questioned what are we asking the hams to do. Rob said the brochure is intended to help new hams to figure out how to use their newly acquired licenses. We also discussed contacting hams who have been licensed for longer.

**Levels of Engagement:** Hal suggested graduated participation levels, as people have multiple obligations and it can be difficult to attend meetings, and mentioned that the Thursday nets are even more simple than attending meetings. Rob felt that it is also important for people to attend meetings.

**Contact information on website:** Dave, KM6TCB, noted the lack of contact info on the website. Rob explained that it is in the footer throughout the site, but will look at making the contact info more prominent.

**Informing local hams of the revamped KAROECHO:** Don mentioned that there is the ARRL East Bay Section Manager's Newsletter that lists all new licensees in the East Bay Section. Also there are listings on the FCC websites that list the date of issuance for all hams in El Cerrito and Kensington. There are people who attended a meeting or two in the past and never came back, and may not realize that we're still meeting in a different format. Don suggested mailing to all hams in El Cerrito and Kensington to let them know that we're now organized, have a website, etc. It may be useful to let them know a new face and structure have emerged in the last year and a half. We might be able to get some of the former people involved again, even if they don't come to the meetings. Don mentioned that it is more important to check-in to the Thursday night net and participate on the air, than to attend business meetings in person.

**Recruitment via HamCram:** Don is open to getting new operators via a Hamcram as well, perhaps in the spring. There are just under 200 hams in the two cities.

**Volunteering at race events:** The North Coast group out of Humboldt assists with foot races, which gives them practice using their radios. KAROECHO did that a couple of years ago for the Grizzly 100, and just this summer for a Boy Scout hike. It can be a fun practice. How do we get event organizers to know to contact us?

**Logo:** Karen asked that we have a logo and banner to help with recruiting.

**Social networking among hams:** Don (a new guest) asked whether the social relationships among hams is still a thing. Don commented that sharing a common passion helped people to bond, though that is most evident among the "old timers." EBARC and CCCC have Christmas parties. Our club doesn't have anything like that at this point. We're focused on disaster communications.

## **Brief updates**

### **Approval of El Cerrito community spaces for future meetings**

Howdy has been negotiating with EC for meeting space. The Kensington Community Center building will be reconfigured for seismic and ADA retrofitting, and we will not be able to continue meeting there. The church across the street costs \$300/meeting. El Cerrito Parks and Recreation will take this to city council on December 18, at 7:00, to authorize all EC clubhouses and perhaps fire stations for our meetings. Senior center and community center are other possibilities.

### **Recent maintenance of Kensington KE radios - Rob, Marian, Jerry**

Marian and Jerry performed maintenance on the stations in Kensington, and Rob wrote up a routine and check-list of what needs to be done at each station. He also dropped off a maintenance log, a three ring binder containing the KaroEcho Field

Resource Operations Handbook, pencils, erasers, blank paper, forms 213, net control forms, form 309, etc. The board was notified of this activity, but not to the membership. It will appear in the next newsletter. Kevin offered to get maintenance-free batteries due to an issue with battery acid. Rob will include this report in the newsletter.

**Preparation of 501(c)(3) nonprofit application - Larry**

We're still deciding whether to incorporate as a nonprofit, but are leaning toward it. Nonprofit status would allow us to apply for grants, receive charitable donations, qualify us for cheaper postage for mailings and PO Box (\$130/year), free version of G Suite (Google), etc.

**Information from the ECFD**

Present Fire Chief Lance Maples is retiring Dec 31 and will be replaced by Chief Michael Pigoni. We have received strong support from the FD during Chief Maples' leadership. It is projected that Chief Janes will need support from his new supervisors for our relationship with the EC FD. We'll see how the unfolding changes affect us.

**Radio failure and antenna malfunction at 30 Sept drill**

Don requested an update on the status of the equipment and whether it is being repaired. There's no local repair person that we know of. Jamuel reported that two radios are not working; he has the one that was in Tassajara, and it's the only one that's still working. Rob has a radio he could donate to Tassajara. Don moved that we locate a Kenwood repair facility, or ship them off to Kenwood for repair. Kenwood imposes a limitation (of age) in repairing old radios, but these radios are worth \$300-\$400 if functional.

Hal suggested that we talk to other radio clubs and the fire department for repair resources. We also need to test the Harding radio. Jamuel says that the radios may work when we turn them on, but they can fail when running for a few hours. Jerry reported that all the Kensington radios are working, and that all the radios that are hooked up to antennas were just checked, including the school and fire station. Jerry fixed the radios himself in the past. Hal would like us to get repair info, as there are at least 2 radios that are not currently working. Jerry knows a ham with a two-letter call sign who might repair radios, and thinks he lives in Hayward. Jerry will ask him. He's on the Stanford Palo Alto 5230 repeater.

**KAROECHO Net list:** Jerry updated the KARO ECHO list of people who check into the Net with phone and email information. Email Jerry for a copy.

## **Development and planning for the February SET**

Howdy, Rob, Larry, Jamuel, Jay, and Don are planning the SET for late February, and will hold a planning meeting on January 5. February 16th or 23rd are possibilities for the SET, or we could wait until March. Jerry and Natalie indicated that they would participate.

The SET will include mock messages covering supplies, medical personnel, etc. Some of these will not go to EOC, but be a local request. We'll make it a self-reliant, community-based focus. This will not be in conjunction with CERT, and will be for radio practice. Will be held from 9-1 or thereabouts.

Don explained that we will dispatch mobile and portable units as needed. We won't know where until net control has the information and can assess the need. We'll have mobile mag mounts and a tripod with a gain antenna.

We want to test the equipment at the EOC if possible. You can't have two operators close together at EOC simultaneously because the radios desense each other. There needs to be shielding or space between them. We can have a portable station outside or a mobile with a magmount antenna parked outside the EOC.

Everyone will get a few messages to send and receive. We don't want to overload the EOC; instead, we will focus on sending among CERT areas.

The SET will involve only members of KARO ECHO. Howdy says we're routinely getting 12-15 people checking in on the Thursday nets; and we have at least 50 unique callsigns who have checked in to our weekly net over the past year. We can encourage them to participate in the SET. They keep track of the check-in list. We could reach out to that group. We can announce at every Thursday net..

Members of the planning committee have a document, which Don distributed.

Don strongly suggested that we read and familiarize ourselves with the Field Operations Manual on the website. This is what we'll practice in the SET and is what we'll need to know in case of a true emergency.

Don passed out the outline of the ~60-page field communications manual and circulated two copies of the 30-page appendix; which is the longest thing in the handbook. We should have that printed out including forms ready to be filled out, to take to disasters. There are also posters to place at the station. The appendix is the most important thing to print. Also, read the EmComm training goals on the website. Don walked us through this form and the four skill levels of EmComm Operator Efficiency.

There are 14 active CERT groups with locations, so we'll need at least 14 ham operators that day. Howdy pointed out that this SET will focus on peer-to-peer communication rather than the EOC focus of the previous SET.

**Training session** by Karen and Jay: Development of local frequency band sequences for use by Richmond CERT and ham groups

Jay has designed a list for CHIRP, especially useful for the Marina Bay area, that allows you to enter the station number rather than the frequency. Jay omitted the private repeaters and the far east county frequencies and added FRS and GMRS frequencies, followed by weather channels. The list also includes the time and day of the nets.

You can have 128 channels programmed into a Baofeng HT radio, and he boiled it down to the most “interesting” list that should engage people. In that regard Edward, KM6UBY, can program radios for people. Rob will post this on the website if they provide the files to him.